a personal union since 1386. In 1569, under the Union of Lublin, she lost her independence altogether, and until the partitions of Poland in 1772–93 she shared a common history with that country. One of the most enduring results of the Polish régime was the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in what had hitherto been a practically pagan State, at a time when Lutheranism was being introduced by the Baltic Barons in Livonia and Estonia.[1]

In the sixteenth century the power of the Teutonic Knights in the latter Provinces began to weaken under repeated assaults from the Russians, which reached their high-water-mark under Ivan the Terrible between 1558 and 1584. In 1521 Estonia had already accepted the protection of Sweden; and in 1560, after the dissolution of the Teutonic Order, Poland annexed Courland and Livonia, although a large part of the latter was afterwards wrested from her by the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, in 1626. The districts which thus came under Swedish rule enjoyed a somewhat more liberal régime than had hitherto been their lot. The privileges of the Baltic Barons were curtailed, and something was done towards national education—it was during this period that the University of Dorpat was founded in Estonia. In Courland, however, where the Barons were left a very free hand, owing to Poland's preoccupations elsewhere, the peasants were no better treated during this period than they had been before.

Russian Rule (1710–1918). Finally, the eighteenth century saw the defeat of Charles XII by Peter the Great at Poltava (1709) and the gradual passing of control over the Baltic Provinces from the declining Swedish Empire and Poland to Russia.[2] The period of Russian domination, which lasted down to the outbreak of the World War, opened ominously, although conditions improved somewhat during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In Lithuania the partition of Poland was followed by a period of Russification; the Orthodox religion was introduced, and Catholic ecclesiastical property was to a large extent handed over to the Orthodox Church; the University of Vilna and the higher schools were closed, and the use of the Lithuanian language was forbidden in all schools. In 1861 the peasants were liberated and granted the right to hold a small amount of land; but, after the Polish insurrection of 1863, which was sternly suppressed by Muraviev, it was decreed that

[1] Swedish rule was later a decisive factor in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Estonia.

[2] Riga was captured in 1710 and Reval soon after. Livonia and Estonia were ceded to Russia by the Peace of Nystadt in 1721; Courland gradually became to all intents and purposes a Russian protectorate, and in 1795 formally acknowledged the suzerainty of Catherine the Great. In the course of the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795 the whole of Lithuania proper passed into the hands of Russia, although Memel remained part of Prussia, in which it had been incorporated in the sixteenth century.

563 who estimate their numbers considerably higher than does the official
162 census, lived for the most part near the East Prussian frontier, where they settled as small peasants and artisans in the last century. Small Polish and Lettish minorities inhabited the districts bordering on
566 their respective countries of origin. The bulk of the Lithuanians themselves belonged to the peasant and farmer class. There were, however, fairly large bourgeois, clerical, and intellectual classes; the nobility, in so far as it still existed, resided for the most part in Poland, and was in fact almost entirely Polish.

563 The legal status of the minorities was regulated by Articles 73 and
656 74 of the Constitution of December 1922, which provided that
642 national minorities, forming 'an appreciable part of the citizens', might administer autonomously the affairs of their national culture and elect the necessary bodies to conduct these affairs in the manner prescribed by law. They might also impose taxes on their members for the needs of national culture, and might avail themselves of a proportion of the sums set aside by the State and the local government bodies for purposes of education and charity, in so far as their needs were not satisfied by the general establishments maintained by those bodies.[1]

563 In accordance with the requirements of the League of Nations, on
671 May 12, 1922, shortly after her admission to that body, Lithuania made a Declaration modelled on the Polish Minority Treaty of June 28, 1919. This guaranteed to Lithuanian nationals who belonged to racial, religious, or linguistic minorities the same treatment in law and in fact enjoyed by other nationals, as well as the right to maintain and control at their own expense charitable, religious, and social institutions, schools, and other educational establishments, and to use their own language and practise their own religion therein.[2] Provision was to be made, in towns where there was a considerable proportion of Lithuanian nationals belonging to linguistic minorities, for the instruction of children in the State primary schools in their own

[1] These rights and privileges were confirmed by Section VII of the Constitution of May 25, 1928.

[2] TABLE 2. *Minorities and Education in Lithuania.*

●871

Type of school	*Year*	*Total no. of schools*	*Lithuanian*	*Jewish*	*Russian*	*German*	*Polish*	*Latvian*	*White Russian*	*Diverse*
Primary	1928–9	2,431	2,185	135	15	18	30	8	..	40
"	1935–6	2,308	2,147	109	3	10	11	13	..	15
Secondary	1928–9	122	83	20	2	3	3	1	..	1
"	1935–6	107	74	24	1	3	3	1	..	1
		students								
University	1928–9	3,812	2,555	1,070	47	30	85	10	7	8
"	1935–6	3,223	2,555	486	40	30	84		13	6

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RBI Baltic States RBJ
Lithuania

563 671 tongue, without prejudice to the obligatory teaching of Lithuanian as an additional language. Special clauses (Nos. 7 and 8) extended freedom to the Jews in all educational and religious matters. All persons born in Lithuania after the date of the Declaration, and unable to claim another nationality by birth, were recognized as Lithuanian nationals. The Declaration reproduced the 'guarantee article' of the Polish and other minority treaties, and the ordinary minority procedure was adopted.[1]

563 798 In spite of this good beginning, the treatment of minorities in Lithuania has not improved with the years. Nor was any great effort made to implement the promises of cultural autonomy described above. An autonomous organization established by the Jewish community in 1919, consisting of a National Council and a number of local branches, was abolished by a Christian-Democratic Government in 1924, and no other national minority has so far successfully availed itself of the right of cultural autonomy which it is supposed, in theory, to enjoy.

563 186 871 During the short period of parliamentary government the minorities had already begun to suffer from the ultra-nationalism of the Lithuanian parties, which was accentuated, especially with regard to the Poles, by the interminable Vilna controversy. After the establishment of the Voldemaras dictatorship in 1926, nationalist feeling ran higher than ever, and forty-eight Polish schools were shut. In August 1929 there were reports in the *Berliner Tageblatt* of pogroms against the Jews in Kaunas—always a centre of unrest owing to its high percentage of Jewish, German, and Polish inhabitants—and at Slobodke and Shanz, and there were general complaints that the State exercised too much control over the minority schools. Similar complaints were made, later on, against the Tubelis Administration, although in actual fact most of the Polish schools had been reopened. In August 1934 anti-Jewish outbursts occurred in Kaunas and elsewhere.

Since Herr Hitler's advent to power there has been a considerable amount of German propaganda in Lithuania with the particular object of securing the reincorporation of Memel in Germany.[2] The

[1] Jewish petitions and memoranda were submitted in December 1921 and in June and September 1925. The Polish Government made several complaints of the general treatment of the Polish minority in Lithuania in 1921 and 1922; in 1924–5 a number of petitions from the 'Committee of Polish Exiles', referring to linguistic, educational, and agrarian reform questions, were dealt with by the League Council. In August 1928, 34 Russians submitted a complaint relating to expropriation, which was considered by the Council in its 55th–58th Sessions, but which, in view of the remedial measures taken by the Lithuanian Government, was finally dismissed in January 1930. (See *League of Nations Official Journal*, xi, No. 8, p. 967.) A similar petition from 21 Ukrainians in November 1927 was also dismissed by the Council on September 8, 1928. (See *League of Nations Official Journal*, ix, No. 10, p. 1493.)

[2] The question of the minority in Memel is dealt with below, pp. 93–100.

Lithuania
Latvia

grievances of the German minority itself have been concerned chiefly with the exclusive use of the Lithuanian language in schools, and with the Government's policy of trying to compel German children to attend Lithuanian schools. In 1936 the Poles joined with the Germans in protesting against such measures, and against the restrictive supervision of the press.

Latvia. The national minorities in Latvia formed a larger proportion of the total population[1]—amounting in 1930 to 23·4 per cent.—and played a correspondingly more important part in political life than did those in Estonia or Lithuania. The majority of the Lettish population are small peasants, with a certain number of artisans and labourers and a very small middle class. The large Russian minority also consists chiefly of peasants—many of them refugees—who are settled almost entirely in the frontier districts, whereas the Jews have tended, as usual, to concentrate in the towns. The German minority is made up mainly of expropriated landlords and of merchants, over two-thirds of whom live in Riga. The Poles, most of whom belong to the small landowning and middle classes, tend, like the Russians, to congregate in the border districts.

The Latvian Constitution of 1922 contained no reference to the position of the minorities, although the guarantee of their cultural and national rights had been one of the planks of the 'Political Platforms of the National Council' in 1918. A law of December 6, 1919, however, providing that Lettish should be the language in the law-courts, permitted the use of German and Russian where necessary.[2] Moreover, on December 18, 1919, a 'Law of Scholastic Autonomy' was enacted, providing for the establishment of a council for each of the more important minorities, to have complete control in respect of the types of schools set up, the kind of instruction given, and other educational matters.[3] A specified proportion of the Budget was

[1] TABLE 3. *Population of Latvia According to Race.*

[162]

Race	*1920*		*1930*		*1935*	
	Number	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*	*Number*	*Percentage of total*
Lettish	1,138,536	80·4	1,394,957	73·4	1,472,612	75·50
Russian (including White Russian)	118,023	8·9	237,809	12·5	233,366	11·97
Jewish	60,892	4·3	94,388	4·9	93,479	4·79
German	45,315	3·2	69,855	3·7	62,144	3·19
Polish	31,154	2·2	59,374	1·4	48,949	2·51
Others (including Lithuanians and Estonians)	14,161	1·0	33,593	0·9	39,952	2·04

[2] This privilege was confirmed by a circular of the Ministry of Justice on December 4, 1920, and again by a pronouncement of the Supreme Court of Appeal in January 1931.

[3] Such councils, while acting within a special Minorities Department of the Ministry of Education, would each include a chairman and three other delegates nominated by the

1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1939 R21 Baltic States RB1
Latvia

563 877

allotted to each minority for educational purposes, and the compulsory elementary schools were to be maintained by the State, while no obstacles were to be placed in the way of the establishment of any number of private schools. Up till now such councils have been formed for the German, Russian, White Russian, Jewish, and Polish groups. The Germans appear to be satisfied with the system, but the Russians complain that they receive less than their fair share of the State subsidies, and that the local government bodies, which are composed chiefly of Letts, do not provide enough Russian schools.[1]

563 648

In response to the League's request for a declaration guaranteeing minority rights, Latvia only consented, after protracted negotiations, to make a general Declaration, on July 7, 1923; this proposed that the subject should be regarded as closed, while acknowledging the League Council's right to take up the question again if at any time the situation of the minorities should not 'appear to correspond to the general principles laid down in the various minority Treaties', and admitting the right of the minorities themselves to send petitions to the Council.[2] Latvia also accepted the principle of the League's guarantee, but not the obligatory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice, in place of which she agreed that, if necessary, an advisory opinion might be obtained.

563 186

The situation of the minorities in general, while very favourable under the earlier Agrarian Ministries—so much so that they frequently had representatives in the Cabinet—on the whole deteriorated gradually from about 1929 onwards. In August of that year the Celmins Ministry, which had decided to grant a subsidy towards the erection of a German war memorial, was only saved from defeat

minority concerned. The chairman would represent his nationality in all cultural questions, and would participate in an advisory capacity in the sessions of the Cabinet whenever those questions were under consideration.

563 871

[1] TABLE 4. *Minorities and Education in Latvia.*

Type of school	*Year*	*Total no. of schools*	*Lettish*	*Language of Instruction*							
				Great Russian	*White Russian*	*German*	*Polish*	*Jewish*	*Lithuanian*	*Estonian*	*Diverse*
Primary	1928–9	1,931	1,410	229	31	91	34	80	7	4	45
„	1933–4	1,907	1,461	173	15	77	21	67	11	4	80
Secondary	1928–9	137	81	14	2	13	3	22	1	..	2
„	1933–4	122	87	8	..	10	2	12	1	..	2
		students									
University	1929–30	8,227	6,863	171	..	415	36	726	46	19	3
„	1933–4	7,203	6,103	195	..	234	22	510	30	17	4

[2] Since the Declaration of 1923, only one petition has been lodged (by German nationals) against Latvia, in April 1925, relating to agrarian reform. Previous to it there had been two German petitions on the same subject, in November 1920 and February 1921, and one Jewish petition relating to general minority treatment in September 1921. None of these petitions was brought before the Council.

by the Socialist Opposition through the German minority's eleventh-hour renunciation of the subsidy. In the following November a Bill tabled by Socialist initiative was passed, depriving members of the national minorities of the right to benefit from the distribution of confiscated lands to ex-servicemen, on the ground that they had not shared in the struggle for Latvian independence. These moves, which were primarily designed to overthrow the Government by creating a strong nationalist feeling, were regarded by the German minority as an insult aimed directly at themselves, and they proceeded to withdraw their representative, Herr Berent, from the Cabinet as a protest.

In 1931, under the bourgeois-conservative Ulmanis Government formed in May, and later under the nationalist-bourgeois Skujenieks Ministry of November, there were further attacks on the privileges of the minorities. A new law prescribing the exclusive use of Lettish in the *Saeima*[1] was rejected in December of that year, but an emergency decree issued in October deprived the Germans of all rights over Riga Cathedral, its museum, and its vicarages, which had been in their hands for over 700 years, a measure which aroused the more resentment since a proposal to this effect had already been rejected by the *Saeima* in the previous May and by a plebiscite held in the summer.

The Polish minority, too, came in for its share of attention in the autumn of 1931; the closing of six elementary Polish schools, the suppression of a Polish newspaper, the suspension of the Polish League of Catholic Youth and the Association of Latgalian Poles, and the latter's final dissolution, led to the resignation of one of the Polish deputies in the *Saeima*. But, when the wave of strong nationalist feeling due to the elections had subsided, conditions improved somewhat, and in March 1932 the Poles were allowed full cultural autonomy again.

Under the dictatorship established in May 1934 the privileges of the minorities sustained a fresh series of assaults. Two decrees were issued in June; the first providing that, in families where either of the parents was of Lettish nationality, the children must attend Lettish schools, and that, where the father and mother belonged to different national minorities, the father's nationality, rather than the language spoken in the household, was to be the decisive factor; the second prescribing Lettish as the sole written or spoken language in all State and communal services, except in districts at least half of whose inhabitants were registered at the last census as speaking a language other than Lettish. In July the German Autonomous

[1] Hitherto, both Russian and German had customarily been spoken in the *Saeima*, in addition to Lettish, though there was no law specifically permitting their use.

Educational Board was abolished, and special officials (a German, a Russian, a Pole, and a Jew) have since been put in charge of the educational affairs of their respective national groups. A further blow was struck with the issue of a new decree in January 1935, requiring all public and private economic undertakings to keep their books and conduct their correspondence and general business in the Lettish language. In June twelve Polish schools were closed.

Finally, on New Year's Day of 1936, came the unkindest cut of all, when decrees were issued setting up State Chambers of Trade and of Industry and Commerce, and providing for the eventual dissolution of other economic organizations such as the German guilds, which had existed for some 700 years, and the transfer of their property to the new Chambers or to the local administrations. This measure aroused the resentment not only of the German minority in Latvia, which presented a memorandum on the question to the Government, but also of the German Government, which took up the cudgels on their behalf. On January 16, 1936, the Latvian Minister in Berlin handed in a protest against the violent anti-Latvian press campaign which ensued; on the 22nd the German Minister in Riga called on President Ulmanis, but the latter protested firmly against any German interference in Latvian affairs. Soon after, in March, a secret organization believed to have connexions with Germany was discovered; the arrest of some thirty-five German Balts followed, and, on April 1, a decree was issued dissolving all the economic organizations which had not already complied with the economic decrees of the previous January.[1]

Estonia. The bulk of the Estonians themselves belong to the small peasant class, which was emancipated from serfdom in the last century; a few are labourers and artisans, and there is a small middle class. The national minorities, which in 1934 amounted to 11·8 per cent. of the total population of 1,107,059,[2] consist chiefly of Russians, Germans, Swedes, and Jews. Nearly three-quarters of the Russians are poor peasants living in the eastern frontier districts, the other

[1] The famous Riga *Gewerbeverein* was spared, as being a purely cultural union.

[2] TABLE 5. *Population of Estonia According to Race.*

Race	1922		1934	
	Number	Percentage of total	Number	Percentage of total
Estonian . . .	970,707	87·68	997,923	88·2
German . . .	18,319	1·66	16,346	1·5
Russian . . .	91,109	8·23	92,656	8·5
Swedish . . .	7,850	0·71	7,841	0·7
Jewish . . .	4,566	0·41	4,434	0·4
Others . . .	14,506	1·31	7,190	0·7

563 members, a small executive committee, and local councils if desirable. The competence of the Council extended to all educational, cultural, and charitable institutions, and to the collection of special taxes from the members of the minority, subject to the approval of the Ministers of Finance and Education. In addition to the funds thus raised, the minority received a proportion of the funds set aside by the State and local governments for educational and other cultural purposes.[1]

Up till now the German and Jewish minorities have availed themselves of this law, which has operated very satisfactorily. The Russian minority did not at first consider it necessary to organise a Cultural Council, since, like the Swedes, they already had sufficient influence in the local administrations of the frontier districts, in which they were massed in great numbers; they are now, however, preparing to exercise the right of cultural autonomy. Under the liberal régime thus established there has been singularly little discontent among the national minorities, although under the dictatorship set up in 1934 it would appear to have increased to a certain extent. In the bi-cameral Assembly, which drafted the new Constitution in 1937, the Jewish, Russian, and German minorities had representatives in the Upper Chamber.

3. Church and State[2]

795 162 *Estonia.* The majority of Estonians belong to the Lutheran Church, which has been firmly established ever since the period of Swedish rule (1521–1710); the Greek Orthodox religion introduced under the Russian régime gained relatively few adherents.

659 The Constitution of 1920, while guaranteeing freedom of religion, declared in Article 11 that there was no State religion, and made no

563 871 [1] Table 6. *Minorities and Education in Estonia, 1929–30.**

Type of school	No. of schools	No. of pupils	Nationality (per 100 pupils)				Language of instruction (per 100 pupils)			
			Estonian	Russian	German	Others	Estonian	Russian	German	Others
Primary . . .	1,292	97,979	88·1	8·8	1·3	1·8	88·4	8·8	1·8	1
Secondary . .	83	15,633	85·7	4·4	7·3	2·6	94·5	5·3	0·2	1
Higher (university and higher technical school) . .	2	4,333	86·8	5·3	3·75	4·15	..	..	..	..

* Figures taken from *Estonie de 1920–1930* (Tallinn, 1931).

[2] Table 7. *Religious Denominations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (in percentages of the total populations).*

162 795

Country	Date of census	Lutheran	Roman Catholic	Orthodox	Old Believers	Jews	Others
Estonia .	1934	78·0	0·2	19·0	..	0·4	2·4
Latvia . .	1930	56·6	23·7	8·9	4·8	4·9	1·1
Lithuania .	1923	8·6	80·5	2·5	..	0·9	7·3